

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Ecosystem Indicators Workshop**

**October 10-11, 2007**

**Chair: Jake Rice**

#### **Background**

Ecosystem indicators are key tools for management of aquatic ecosystems. They can be used to assess the status of an ecosystem, its sub-components and impacts of human activities. In addition, ecosystem indicators can be used to assess the social and economic benefits derived from ecosystem use.

Science Sector is frequently asked for support in selecting appropriate ecosystem indicators for a wide range of activities. The Sector has put significant effort into developing and applying ecosystem indicators, and many suites of indicators are currently under discussion within Science and Management.

Enhanced coordination is needed to ensure the most effective delivery of science advice in support of ecosystem indicators, to eliminate duplication in Science support for different client sectors, and to ensure that the best suite of ecosystem indicators is chosen for each application. In response, the Department has created an Ecosystem Indicator Working Group.

The Working Group has three primary objectives:

- provide a forum for client sectors to identify their needs for science-based ecosystem indicators;
- discuss indicator selection criteria and performance standards, and develop guidelines as appropriate;
- ensure that monitoring programmes are closely linked to ecosystem indicators and that appropriate quality assurance is in place when indicators are being used.

#### **Workshop Objectives**

The first workshop will focus on generic indicator selection criteria and performance/evaluation standards, and commence dialogue on management objectives against which indicators can assess status or progress.

Primary objectives:

1. Present the context and rationale for the current list of ecosystem indicators:
  - Why are these ecosystem indicators being reported?
  - What is their purpose?
  - Who is using the ecosystem indicators?
2. Present Client Sector needs for ecosystem indicators:
  - Why are these ecosystem indicators needed, instead of others?

3. Identify and agree upon a set of ecosystem indicator selection criteria.
4. Identify and agree upon performance evaluation standards for these ecosystem indicators.
5. Prepare for the 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop.

Prior to the workshop, Science members of the Working Group will prepare an inventory of ongoing ecosystem indicators and the context within which these indicators are reported. At the workshop, Science members from each region will present the inventories by focusing on the context.

Client Sector members of the Working Group will develop a list of desired science support related to ecosystem indicators. In addition to this list, Clients should develop an inventory of current indicator-based reporting that is supported by a monitoring program or scientific research program within their Sector. Client Sector members may collaborate with regional Science members, rather than creating a separate list. At the workshop, Client Sector members will present their needs for ecosystem indicators.

The outcomes of the first workshop would guide the focus of the second workshop: complete the indicator selection and evaluation framework; or evaluate candidate indicators against the selection criteria and management objectives, focusing on one or two priority applications.

## **Products**

A CSAS Proceedings Document will be produced to summarize the workshop discussions and conclusions. If consensus can be reached on the indicator selection criteria and performance evaluation standards then a Science Advisory Report will be produced.

## **Participation**

Participation of Science (Ecosystem Science and Oceans Science (NHQ)) from NHQ and Regional Science, Client Sector NHQ and Regional client representation for Fisheries Management, Aquaculture Management, Oceans Management and Habitat Management is expected. Policy and SARA Secretariat NHQ will also be expected to participate.